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BAKER'S DARKEY PLAYS

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY

An Ethiopian Farce in One Scene

BY

GEORGE H. COES

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

CHARACTERS.

CAPTAIN NEVERSINK, *of the good sloop "Nonesuch."*

CHARLES AUGUSTUS, *a Photographer.*

SALLY, *a deceived maiden.*

JIM, *her brother, bent on revenge.*

DEPUTY SHERIFF.

BILL, *a Butcher.*

FIRST CITIZEN.

SECOND CITIZEN.

THIRD CITIZEN.

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MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

SCENE. — *A photographer's saloon. Entrances* R. 1 E., L. 1 E., L. 2 E., *and* C. D. *in flat. Camera up* R. *Other furniture ad libitum. Table down* L. *and chairs.*

(CHARLES AUGUSTUS *discovered seated at table reading letter.*)

CHARLES. Another letter from Miss Johnson, — charming creature, she's dead in love with me. Now here am I, head over heels in debt, and business dull. I live in fear of my creditors, who come every day by the dozen, dunning the very life out of me. (*Enter* SALLY C. D. *unperceived, and stands behind* CHARLES.) Now, Miss Johnson has plenty of stamps, and is handsome as a Venus. I think I'll elope with her and get married. But what is to become of Sally? I've promised to marry her. Alas, she is poor, and I never could support her, so I will let her slide, and I'll write to Miss Johnson, and propose to her to elope with me. (*Writes.*) My Dear Miss Johnson: I am in raptures reading your letter. That I love you I solemnly swear, and I will ever be true to you. Say you will elope with me, and hasten to have the marriage ceremony performed at once, that I may call you mine forever. Yours truly, Charles Augustus.

SALLY. Oh, you villain! Oh, you deceiver! Oh, you double-dyed monster!

CHARLES. My dear Sally, it's only a joke.

SALLY. Only a joke, you rascal! I'll fix you for this. I heard your conversation. You're going to elope with Miss Johnson, hey? I'll go and get my brother Jim, who stands six feet high, and he'll give you a thrashing you richly deserve — you horrid, mean, contemptible wretch!

CHARLES. Hold on, Sally, I assure you —

SALLY. Don't talk to me. (*Exit hurriedly* C. D. *slamming door behind her.*)

CHARLES. Confound the luck! Caught in the very act. I've put my foot in it now. Gone after brother Jim — great big fellow — he'll eat me up. The best thing I can do is to fly from here, and stay away until this affair blows over. I'll shut up shop and go at once. (*Enter* CAPT. NEVERSINK.) Oh, Lord! here he is now.

CAPT. How are you, sir ?

CHARLES. How will I ever get out of this scrape? (*Aloud.*) I beg your pardon, sir, you have the advantage of me.

CAPT. No! you've got the advantage of me.

CHARLES. I assure you, sir, it was only a joke.

CAPT. Joke! Well you just fork over five dollars, and there won't be so much of a joke.

CHARLES. Five dollars ? Why, ain't you brother Jim ?

CAPT. No, I'm not brother Jim. My name is Captain Neversink, of the good sloop "Nonesuch."

CHARLES. Ah, you want your pictures taken. Sit right down, Captain Nonesuch.

CAPT. Neversink, sir.

CHARLES. I hope you never will, Captain. Remove your hat —

CAPT. No, you don't. You took some pictures of me the other day and warranted them fast colors. See here! (*Show cards.*) All faded.

CHARLES. They have vanished.

CAPT. Well, I should say they had vanished. Here, give me my money.

CHARLES. Sit again. I'll take some more for you.

CAPT. No. A burnt child is afraid of fire. Give me my money and I'll go somewhere else.

CHARLES. All right. You'll have to wait until some one comes in to have pictures taken. When they pay me, I'll pay you.

CAPT. I'm in a hurry — I can't wait. Go borrow it of somebody.

CHARLES (*aside*). I'll go and leave him in charge of the office, and brother Jim will take him for me. (*Aloud.*) Ah, Captain, sit down a few minutes, and I'll go and try and raise you the money. (*Takes off morning-gown, and puts on his street coat.*)

CAPT. How long will you be gone ?

CHARLES. Five minutes. Here put on this coat — you're the boss now. If any one comes in, say your operator has stepped out for a moment. (*Exit* CHARLES, D. *in* F.)

CAPT. (*puts on morning-gown*). If that rascal don't come back, I'll take enough furniture to get square with him. (*Looks around room; goes to* R. I E., *dog barks, he jumps back.*) I'll be dog-goned if I go in there. (*Goes to camera, and looks in it; bus. ad lib.; enter* DEPUTY SHERIFF; *he looks around and discovers* CAPT. *looking in camera; goes to him, catches him by the ear, and drags him to* R. H. *corner of stage.* CAPT. *shouting "Murder! Let go my ear!" etc.*)

SHERIFF. I'm looking for you. (*Beats him with stuffed club.*)

CAPT. I'm sorry you found me.

SHERIFF. I know you, Jeremy Diddler. (*Same business.*)

CAPT. I'm not Jimmy the Fiddler. I'm —

SHERIFF. I know you, Charles Augustus. (*Beats him.*)

CAPT. That's not my name, it's —

SHERIFF. Don't deny your autograph, Charles, t'won't do. Too thin. Ain't you Charles Augustus?

CAPT. No, sir. (SHERIFF *beats him.*) Yes, yes, I'm Charles Augustus.

SHERIFF. So far, so good.

CAPT. So far, very bad.

SHERIFF. You have eluded me long enough. Here's a bill from your former landlady — come, settle. Sixty-five dollars.

CAPT. I don't owe any landlady sixty-five dollars.

SHERIFF. What, you deny the debt?

CAPT. Yes. (*Beats him.*) No, no — I owe it. I'll pay it.

SHERIFF. A bill from your tailor — suit of clothes and ulster — ninety-six dollars.

CAPT. I haven't bought a suit of clothes in five years.

SHERIFF. You dispute that bill, hey? (*Beats him.*)

CAPT. Yes! No! I owe it, certainly. Any more bills?

SHERIFF. Now I'm satisfied. Come, settle, Charles.

CAPT. Say, Mister, you're wrong! I'm not Charles Augustus. (SHERIFF *is about to beat him*). Hold on! Let me speak. My name is Captain Neversink, of the Good Sloop "Nonesuch." I am from Mud-cum-Slushy. You mean the other fellow — he owes me five dollars, and I'm waiting here while he has gone to get it.

SHERIFF. What, have I made a mistake? My dear Captain, I apologize.

CAPT. Pound a man to death, then apologize.

SHERIFF. Say not a word about this; my reputation is at stake.

CAPT. Yes, my back is all chops, cutlets and porter-house steaks.

SHERIFF. I'll meet you again and make amends for this.

CAPT. Never mind; if I meet you again, I'll cross over on the other side of the street.

SHERIFF. I'm very sorry about this affair. Good-day. (*Exit.*)

CAPT. You look sorry. I'll leave this place before some one else comes. (*Goes to door and is met by* SALLY *who cowhides him all around stage to* L. H. *corner. She discovers her mistake and screams.*)

SALLY. Oh, I beg your pardon. I took you for the other fellow. I hope I haven't hurt you.

CAPT. Oh, no. You've cut my legs all to pieces, that's all.

SALLY. I am very sorry, indeed. I hope you will forgive me. Ta, ta. (*Bus. ad lib.*) I'll see you again. (*Exit* D. *in* F.)

CAPT. Not if I see you first, you won't. (*Noise outside.*) Somebody else is coming. (*Goes to* R. H., *dog barks; runs to* C. D., *is met by* BUTCHER, *who stands* C. *of stage.*)

BILL. Say, young fellow, when are you going to pay me that meat-bill? (*Shows bill.*)

CAPT. What meat-bill?

BILL. Two dozen porter-house steaks, a dozen mutton chops, twenty-eight veal cutlets, six pounds of liver and a beef's heart. Twenty-two dollars and forty cents.

CAPT. My good fellow, I don't owe such a bill as that.

BILL. What do yer soy? (*Bus. ad lib. shown.*) Soy, if you don't settle that bill the next time you come down to the market, I'll give you a bath in the corn-beef tray. If I don't, I hope I may never leg another lamb. (*Bus. and exit.*)

CAPT. (*bus. of imitating* BILL). This is enough fun for one day, so I'll seek consolation aboard my sloop. (*Is going when* JIM *enters and knocks him down.*)

JIM. Get up, and let me knock you down again.

CAPT. No; I'm down, I'll stay here.

JIM (*pulls him up on his feet*). Oh, you deceiver of innocent females!

CAPT. No, my friend; what do you mean?

JIM. You refuse to marry my sister, hey?

CAPT. How can I? I am a married man.

JIM. So you are a double villain. (*About to strike* CAPT.)

CAPT. Hold on, I ain't the other fellow, he's gone out.

JIM. Isn't your name Charles Augustus?

CAPT. No, my name is Captain Neversink.

JIM. What? Have I made a mistake?

CAPT. Well, I should say you had.

JIM. Why, Captain, I beg ten thousand pardons. (*Shakes his hand violently.*) My dear fellow, I'm very sorry indeed. I wouldn't hurt you for the world. What are you doing here?

CAPT. I had some pictures taken here and they all vanished. I come to get my money back, and he's gone out to get it, and left me in charge of the store. What might be your name?

JIM. My name is Jim.

CAPT. What! Brother Jim?

JIM. I'm brother to the young lady who has been deceived by — (*about to strike*).

CAPT. Hold on, Jim, it's the other fellow.

JIM. Oh, I see how it is; but we'll get even with him. Say, lets you and me take some pictures.

CAPT. I don't know anything about the business.

JIM. I'll show you. That room is where the chemicals are; go and light the gas. (L. 1 E.)

CAPT. What kind of gals?

JIM. Chemicals. This room is where he keeps the plates. (L. 2 E.) Don't you disturb any of the bottles; if you do you will suffocate. Now I'll go and prepare the plates, and you light the gas, and be very careful. Here's some matches. (*Gives* CAPT. *matches.*)

CAPT. Say, you light the gas, and I'll find the plates.

JIM. Pshaw! Go ahead, Captain, there's no danger!

(*Both exeunt; enter* CHARLES AUGUSTUS, *and looks around.*)

CHARLES. The Captain gone. Tired of waiting, I presume. I hear my creditors are going to raid me, so I'll lock up the place and

leave the city for a few weeks. (*Goes to* L. 1 E., *locks door; same* L. 2 E.*; is about to go.*) I declare I forgot to fix my chemicals. If I had an enemy and wanted to get rid of him, I'd lock him up in this room, and he'd suffocate in five minutes. (CAPT. *groans.*) Hello, what's that? Have I locked some one in there? (*Opens door* L. 1 E., *when* CAPT. *falls in his arms nearly suffocated.*) Why, Captain, is that you?

CAPT. Yes, what there is left of me.

CHARLES. What were you doing in that room?

CAPT. (*points to* L. 2 E.). He told me to go and light the gas.

CHARLES. He? Who?

CAPT. Jim; he's in there.

JIM (*knocks at* L. 2 E.). Oh, Captain!

CHARLES. What a narrow escape! (JIM *knocks again, bus. ad lib.*)

CAPT. Have you got my five dollars?

CHARLES. No, Captain, but I'll get it for you directly. (*Aside.*) If I let him out, he'll kill me. I'll leave the place as it is. Here, Captain, is the key; you let him out, and I'll get your money immediately. (*Exit* D. *in* F.).

JIM. Captain, what have you locked me in for?

CAPT. Shut up!

JIM. If you don't open this door, I'll break it down.

CAPT. Smash it, I don't care.

JIM. Oh, won't I give it to you when I get out of here.

CAPT. Well, you stay there then.

JIM. Open this door!

CAPT. All right, I'm coming. (*Crawls to door and unlocks it;* JIM *knocks him down and stands over him.*)

JIM. What did you lock me in for?

CAPT. I didn't, Jim; he's been here.

JIM. Who?

CAPT. Charles Augustus.

JIM. Why didn't you tell me he was here?

CAPT. How could I? He locked me in there. I was nearly dead when he discovered me.

JIM. Where is he now?

CAPT. Gone. When I told him you was in there, he gave me the key, and told me to let you out when I got ready.

JIM. You stay here? I'll find him. (*Exit* D. *in* F.)

CAPT. No, sir. I'll just take five dollars worth of things here and make tracks for my sloop. (*Takes tablecloth, books, etc. and is going towards* C. D., *when drum and horn are heard. Door opens and several men enter with tar bucket, bag of feathers and rail, and march round* CAPTAIN *who retreats to* R. H. *corner of stage. The others halt at back* L. C., *then very mysteriously pantomime to* CAPT.)

FIRST MAN. There's the wretch.

SECOND MAN. Let's proceed at once.

THIRD MAN. Hold! Let's question him. (*To* CAPTAIN.) Miserable man, why hast thou dastardly assailed the holy laws of matrimony. Thou inhuman monster!

CAPT. See here —

OMNES. Silence!

SECOND MAN. Justice cries out for deep and dire revenge for your diabolical crimes. Thou perjurer!

CAPT. Now hold on —

OMNES. Silence!

THIRD MAN. Thou hast cruelly deceived an innocent and lovely maiden. Oh, horrible wretch!

CAPT. Say, my friends —

OMNES. Silence!

FIRST MAN. How canst thou atone for thy dark deeds of villainy, thou incorrigible fiend!

CAPT. Let me —

OMNES. Silence!

THIRD MAN. See, the guilty wretch has nothing to say in his defence.

CAPT. Will you give a man a chance?

OMNES. Silence.

FIRST MAN. What say you? Is he guilty or not guilty?

OMNES. Guilty!

SECOND MAN. Thou base ingrate! Hear the sentence which this honorable body has prepared, and which shall be executed upon thee for the ignominious crime you have committed against the fairer sex. Thou shalt be divested of thy clothing, thou shalt be besmeared with boiling tar from head to foot, thou shalt be covered with a complete suit of feathers, and be ridden upon a rail through the streets of the city as a warning to all evil doers of thy stripe.

CAPT. Say, you're wrong! I'm not the man. I'm Captain Neversink, of the good sloop "Nonesuch." The other fellow did it.

FIRST MAN. Let the sentence be executed.

(*They are about to seize him when* SALLY *and* JIM *rush on bringing* CHARLES AUGUSTUS, *who breaks away and kneels in* C. *of stage imploringly. In the meantime the* CAPTAIN *has gone off* R. I. E. *and returns with dog attached to his back. He swings around crying "Call off the dog!" etc.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

(*Or close in.*)

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